

Page 4, lines 1-2, delete the words "removing light ends from the modified pitch by evaporation to produce a bottom fraction containing the free phytosterols", and substitute therefor the words:

-- distilling the modified pitch in a first evaporator to remove light ends from the modified pitch and produce a bottom fraction containing the free phytosterols --.

Page 4, line 3, delete the word "evaporating", and substitute therefor the words:

-- distilling only --.

Page 4, line 3, immediately after the word "fraction", insert the words:

-- in a second evaporator --.

Page 4, line 5, immediately after the word "distilling", insert the word:

-- only --.

Page 4, line 5, immediately before the word "distillate", insert the words:

-- light phase --.

Page 4, after the paragraph ending on line 13, insert the following new paragraphs:

– Unlike the process of Malik et al., the foregoing process enables the preparation of high purity phytosterol crystals from tall oil pitch with only two distillation stages and only one stage of crystallization, and to do so with the use of a comparatively small amount of solvent. Nevertheless, it may be considered desirable in some cases to achieve phytosterol yields with even higher crystal purity. In accordance with another embodiment of the invention, a marginal improvement is achieved as follows:

- (a) producing a light phase distillate containing free phytosterols in the manner described in steps (a) to (c) above;
- (b) re-distilling only the light phase distillate so produced to enhance the concentration of free phytosterols in the light phase distillate;
- (c) dissolving only the re-distilled light phase distillate in a solvent comprising an alcohol to produce a solution containing the free phytosterols; and,
- (d) continuing the procedure as in steps (d) and (f) above to isolate crystallized phytosterols.